

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A charge information processing apparatus for calculating charges required for working as a franchisee that provides automobile repairing services by a specific repairing method, comprising:
 - means for inputting scale information of a repair shop into said charge information processing apparatus; and
 - means for calculating introduction expenses required for facilities working as the franchisee providing the automobile repairing services by the specific repairing method, based on said scale information of a repair shop inputted into said charge information processing apparatus by said inputting means, and for calculating an instruction fee of said specific repairing method, a royalty, and prices of repairing instruments and repairing materials required for implementing said specific repairing method;
 - means for managing information of franchisees;
 - means for managing a number of franchisees for each region; and
 - means for outputting information for preparing a branching plan based on the number of franchisees for each region that are managed by said means for managing a number of franchisees.
2. (Cancelled).
3. (Cancelled).
4. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim1, wherein said specific repairing method comprises procedures associated with a repairing method, repairing instruments, and repairing materials that are devised to complete repairs within a predetermined amount of time.

5. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said specific repairing method comprises procedures associated with a repairing method, repairing instruments, and repairing materials that are devised to perform repairs for predetermined charges.

6. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said specific repairing method includes a repairing process in which usage amounts of repairing materials are defined.

7. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said repairing instruments are provided with at least one measuring device for measuring repairing materials in amounts corresponding to said usage amounts.

8. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said repairing method includes a repairing process in which usage duration of said repairing instruments is defined.

9. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said repairing instruments are provided with at least one timing device for timing such that usage of said repairing instruments is finished within said usage duration.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising:

a first means for managing inventories of repairing materials to be supplied to franchisees.

12. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising:

means for managing inventories of instructing materials for instructing franchisees on said specific repairing method.

13. (Cancelled).

14. (Cancelled).

15. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising:

means for acquiring sales information of franchisees;

means for managing the gross sales information of franchisees acquired by said means for acquiring sales information of franchisees;

means for estimating gross sales in a predetermined period based on the sales information that is managed by said means for managing the gross sales information of franchisees; and

means for estimating demands of repairing materials based on results from said means for estimating gross sales in a predetermined period.

16. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said means for acquiring sales information of franchisees acquires sales information from a means for calculating estimates for automobile repairing services by said specific repairing method via at least one communicating device.

17. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said information inputted into said charge information processing apparatus comprises scale information of a repair shop, and said charge information processing apparatus further comprises:

means for preparing introduction plan information required for facilities working as said franchisee based on the scale information of the repair shop inputted by said means for inputting scale information of said repair shop.

18. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said means for calculating introduction expenses calculates the introduction expenses based on the introduction plan information prepared by said means for preparing introduction plan information.

19. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said means for calculating estimates for automobile repairing services calculates an amount totaling the introduction expenses, the instructing fee, the royalty, and the prices of repairing instruments and repairing materials.

20. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 1 further comprising:

means for notifying a charge collection handling agent of a request for collection handling of a total amount.

21. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 19 further comprising:

means for outputting the introduction expenses, the instructing fee, the royalty, the prices of repairing instruments and repairing materials, and the total amount thereof calculated by said means for calculating estimates for automobile repairing services after editing them in a predetermined document format.

22. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said means for outputting estimates for automobile repairing services is an image display apparatus.

23. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said means for outputting estimates for automobile repairing services is a printer.

24. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said predetermined document format is one of an estimate format and an invoice format.

25. (Previously Presented) A franchise system apparatus comprising:

- a charge information processing apparatus included in the franchise system apparatus for calculating charges required for working as a franchisee that provides automobile repairing services by a specific repairing method;

- an estimation apparatus included in the franchise system apparatus for calculating estimates of automobile repairing services by said specific repairing method; and

- a communication apparatus included in the franchise system apparatus for communicating data between said charge information processing apparatus and said estimation apparatus,

- wherein said charge information processing apparatus comprises an input apparatus for inputting scale information of a repair shop into said charge information processing apparatus;

 - means for managing information of franchisees;

 - means for managing the number of franchisees for each region;

 - means for outputting information for preparing a branching plan based on the number of franchisees for each region that are managed by said means for managing information of franchisees; and

 - means for calculating introduction expenses required for facilities providing said automobile repairing services, based on scale information of a repair shop, an instructing fee for instructing said specific repairing method, a royalty, and prices of repairing instruments and repairing materials required for implementing said specific repairing method.

26. (Previously Presented) The franchise system apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said estimating apparatus is further provided with a second means for managing inventories of repairing materials owned by franchisees.

27. (Previously Presented) The franchise system apparatus according to claim 26, wherein said estimation apparatus is further provided with means for outputting information for ordering repairing materials.

28. (Previously Presented) The franchise system apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said estimation apparatus is further provided with means for managing information on sales by providing the automobile repairing services based on said specific repairing method.

29. (Previously Presented) A charge information processing apparatus for calculating introduction expenses required for facilities working as a franchisee that provides automobile repairing services by a specific repairing method, comprising:

- means for storing charge calculation base data for calculating introduction expenses corresponding to scale information of an automobile repair shop;

- means for inputting the scale information of the automobile repair shop into said charge information processing apparatus;

- means for managing information of franchisees;

- means for managing the number of franchisees for each region;

- means for outputting information for preparing a branching plan based on the number of franchisees for each region that are managed by said means for managing the number of franchisees; and

- means for calculating the introduction expenses based on the inputted scale information of a repair shop and said charge calculation base data stored in said means for storing charge calculation base data;

- wherein said charge calculation base data comprises:

- calculating an instruction fee for said specific repairing method;

- calculating a royalty, and

- calculating prices of repairing instruments and repairing materials required for implementing said specific repairing method.

30. (Previously Presented) The charge information processing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein said charge calculation base data is an introduction plan table associating the scale information of the repair shop with introduction plan information, and a charge list, and said means for calculating the introduction expenses reads out introduction plan information corresponding to the inputted scale information with reference to said introduction plan table, and calculates the introduction expenses based on the read out introduction plan information and the charge list.

31. (Cancelled).

32. (Cancelled).

33. (Cancelled).

34-35. (Cancelled).